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ABSTRACT

Promoting Achievement in School through Sports (PASS) is an academic high school curriculum developed by the American Sports Institute. It is a daily, year-long, credit-bearing, physical education elective for students who love sports but are not performing up to their academic potential. PASS is based on the concept that the principles and skills that lead to success in athletics are the same as those that lead to success in academics. Students in the course study eight fundamentals in athletic mastery: concentration, balance, relaxation, power, rhythm, flexibility, attitude, and instinct. Students are recommended for the class by their counselor, a teacher, or the athletic director. The program was pilot-tested at McAteer High School in 1990-1991 with nine PASS students and nine control group students. The goal for the first year of implementation--to increase the grade point average for half of the PASS students by a minimum of half a grade point--was met. Fifty-five percent of the PASS students increased their grades in academic subjects as well as physical education. The initial impact study confirms that PASS makes a difference in a student's academic performance as measured by overall grade point average in all courses, both including and excluding physical education courses. Results support the PASS premise that to improve the academic performance of those students involved in athletics, there needs to be an increased, rather than a decreased, emphasis on the appropriate study and practice of sports. (IAH)

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PROMOTING ACHIEVEMENT IN SCHOOL THROUGH SPORTS

First Year Impact Study

September 1991

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SUMMARY

The goal for the first year of implementing the PASS program was to increase the grade point average for half the students by a minimum of half a grade point. This goal was met.

Grade Increases: For academic subjects, excluding PE grades, five (55%) of the nine students who participated in the PASS class improved their grades by at least half a grade point. In contrast, 11% of the control group showed a similar increase. Of the PASS students, four (44%) increased their GPA by a full grade point while none of the control group showed a similar increase.

Grade Decreases: Two (22%) of the PASS student's grades dropped by more than half a group point, whereas four (44%) of the control group's grades dropped by a similar margin. None of the PASS students' grades, but 33% of the control group's grades dropped by a full grade point.

Grades Unchanged: In addition, 11% of both the PASS and control group students' grades were unchanged.

On Average: PASS students' grades increased 0.37 whereas the control group's grades dropped by 0.41.

The complete report gives information both with and without PE grades.

CONCLUSION

The initial impact study confirms that PASS makes a difference in a student's academic performance as measured by overall GPA in all courses, both including and excluding PE courses. Further, it supports the premise of PASS that in order to improve academic performance for those students involved in athletics, there needs to be an increased, not a decreased, emphasis on the appropriate study and practice of sports.

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OVERVIEW

Promoting Achievement in School through Sports (PASS) is an academic high school curriculum developed by the American Sports Institute (ASI). PASS is a daily, year-long, credit-bearing, physical education elective for those students who love sports but are not performing up to their academic potential.

Based on the concept that the principles and skills that lead to success in athletics are the same as those that lead to success in academics, students study eight Fundamentals of Athletic Mastery (FAMs). The FAMs include Concentration, Balance, Relaxation, Power, Rhythm, Flexibility, Attitude and Instinct.

Students get into the PASS class at the recommendation of their counselor, a teacher, or the Athletic Director. During the current curriculum development phase, PASS is taught by ASI president Joel Kirsch. In the future, PASS is intended to be widely disseminated through a process of training high school teachers and providing support materials.

STUDY RATIONALE

Schools are bombarded with numerous innovative attempts to improve students' learning. In order to establish that PASS is a program that gets results, ASI set out to show that by participating in PASS, students improve their academic performance. The most straightforward way to measure academic achievement is to look at grades.

At McAteer High School, student GPAs are calculated both including and excluding the PE grade(s). Therefore, this study examined GPAs with and without the PE grade.

STUDY DESIGN

Phase 1 Completed during the fall of 1990:

1. Analyze the PASS student population to determine composition on four variables: sex, ethnic group, grade level, number and types of sports.
2. Identify a control group that matches the PASS students.
3. Collect and analyze spring 1990 grades for both groups.

Phase 2 Completed during the summer of 1991:

1. Collect spring 1991 grades for both groups.
2. Compare the grades of the PASS students with the control group.

BASELINE DATA

The PASS students were matched with a control group based on the following criteria, ranked in order of importance: sex, ethnic group, grade level, and number and type of sports played after school. Both the PASS class and the control group included the following:

Sex:	Six boys and three girls
Ethnic Group:	Six Blacks, two Hispanics, and one Anglo
Grade Level:	One freshman, six sophomores, one junior, and one senior
# of Sports:	Except for one student in PASS and one in the control group who played no after-school sports, all students participated in at least one after-school sport.
Type of Sports:	Six PASS students played basketball, three played football, and one played softball. Among the control group, six played basketball, four went out for track, and one each played football, softball, volleyball, and cross country.

Spring 1990 grades for both the entering PASS students and a control group were gathered. The ranges, both with and without PE grades, are displayed in Chart 1.

Chart 1

Spring 1990 Range of Grades

PASS Class GPAs		Control Group GPAs	
With PE	Without PE	With PE	Without PE
0.00	0.00	1.58	1.27
0.87	0.27	1.71	1.31
1.06	0.69	2.06	1.88
1.48	1.00	2.06	1.88
1.61	1.08	2.23	2.06
2.03	1.65	2.52	2.23
2.03	1.69	2.52	2.23
2.06	1.88	2.71	2.81
2.23	2.04	3.00	3.04

At the end of spring semester 1990, prior to participation in the PASS class, grades for incoming PASS students, including their PE grade, ranged from a 0.00 to a 2.23 grade point average. Excluding the PE grade, the range was from 0.00 to 2.04. The control group grades, including PE, ranged from 1.58 to 3.00. Excluding the PE grade, the range was from 1.27 to 3.04.

* * *

The average GPA, including PE, for PASS students was 1.48. Excluding PE the average was 1.14. For the control group the average GPA, including PE, was 2.26 and without PE the average GPA was 2.08. Chart 2 summarizes this information.

Chart 2

Baseline Data on Average GPA

	With PE	Without PE
PASS students	1.48	1.14
Control group	2.26	2.08

* * *

THE FINDINGS

After participating in the full school year program, grades were collected again at the end of spring term 1991. Chart 3 displays the range of spring 1991 grades.

Chart 3

Spring 1991 Range of Grades

PASS Class GPAs		Control Group GPAs	
With PE	Without PE	With PE	Without PE
0.83	0.75	0.67	0.67
0.83	1.00	1.33	0.80
1.17	1.00	2.00	1.60
1.50	1.25	2.08	1.70
2.00	1.46	2.17	1.80
2.21	1.50	2.17	1.80
2.33	1.75	2.33	2.00
2.43	2.20	2.57	2.33
3.00	2.67	2.57	2.33

At the end of spring semester 1991, after participating in the PASS class, grades for PASS students, including their PE grade, ranged from a 0.83 to a 3.00. Excluding the PE grade, the range was from 0.75 to 2.67. The control group grades, including PE, ranged from 0.67 to 2.57. Excluding the PE grade, the range was from 0.67 to 2.33.

* * *

Chart 4 summarizes and compares the rate of increase or decrease in the range of grades, including PE, for the PASS students and the control group. Among the PASS students, the lowest grade rose by almost a full grade point, from 0.00 to 0.83 and the high GPA increased from a 2.23 to 3.00, a 0.77 gain. In the control group, the low-end grade dropped almost a full grade, from a 1.58 to a 0.67 for a loss of 0.91. The high GPA also dropped, from a 3.00 to a 2.57, a loss of 0.43.

Chart 4

Increase/Decrease in Range of Grades

Including PE Grades

		1990	1991	+/- Difference
PASS	Low	0.00	0.83	+0.83
	High	2.23	3.00	+0.77
Control Group	Low	1.58	0.67	-0.91
	High	3.00	2.57	-0.43

* * *

Chart 5 summarizes and compares the rate of increase or decrease in the range of grades, excluding PE, for the PASS students and the control group.

Among the PASS students the lowest grade rose by almost a full grade point, from 0.00 to 0.75 and the high GPA increased from a 2.04 to 2.67, a 0.63 gain. In the control group, the lowest grade dropped from a 1.27 to a 0.67 for a loss of 0.60. The high GPA also dropped, from a 3.04 to a 2.33 for a 0.70 decrease.

Chart 5

Increase/Decrease in Range of Grades

Excluding PE Grades

		1990	1991	+/- Difference
PASS	Low	0.00	0.75	+0.75
	High	2.04	2.67	+0.63
Control Group	Low	1.27	0.67	-0.60
	High	3.04	2.33	-0.70

* * *

Chart 6 identifies and compares the average GPA, both with and without PE grades, for the PASS and control group students. The average GPA for PASS students increased both with (+0.33) and without (+0.37) the PE grades whereas the GPA for the control group dropped both with (-0.27) and without (-0.41) the PE grades.

Chart 6

Increase/Decrease in Average GPA

	Including PE Grades			Excluding PE Grades		
	1990	1991	+/-	1990	1991	+/-
PASS	1.48	1.81	+0.33	1.14	1.51	+0.37
Control Group	2.26	1.99	-0.27	2.08	1.67	-0.41

* * *

Chart 7 presents individual PASS and control group grades, including PE for spring 1990 and spring 1991. It also displays the amount of increase or decrease in grade point average for each student.

Chart 7

1990-91 Student Comparison Data

Grades Including PE

	PASS CLASS			CONTROL GROUP		
Student*	1990	1991	+/-	1990	1991	+/-
MB-10	2.06	2.33	+0.27	2.06	2.17	+0.11
MB-9	1.61	2.21	+0.60	3.00	2.17	-0.83
MH-10	2.03	2.00	-0.03	2.23	2.08	-0.15
MH-10	2.23	1.17	-1.06	1.71	2.33	+0.62
MB-10	1.06	0.83	-0.23	1.58	0.67	-0.91
MA-10	2.03	3.00	+0.97	2.52	2.57	+0.05
FB-12	1.48	2.43	+0.95	2.52	2.57	+0.05
FB-11	0.87	1.50	+0.63	2.06	1.33	-0.73
FB-10	0.00	0.83	+0.83	2.71	2.00	-0.71

M/F = Male or female
B/H/A = Black, Hispanic, Anglo
9/10/11/12 = Grade level

Five (55%) of the nine PASS students increased their GPA by at least half a grade point. In contrast, one (11%) of the control group students increased his grades by a similar margin.

Overall, six of the nine (66%) of the PASS students increased their grade point average by at least a tenth of a point in contrast with two (22%) of the control group.

Among the PASS students, grades decreased by at least a tenth of a point for two (22%) students, whereas among the control group, five (55%) students' grades decreased.

Variations of less than a tenth of a grade point were considered unchanged. One (11%) PASS student and two (22%) of the control group showed no change.

* * *

The difference between the PASS and control group persists when PE grades are excluded. Chart 8 displays this data.

Chart 8
1990-91 Student Comparison Data
Grades Excluding PE

	PASS CLASS			CONTROL GROUP		
Student	1990	1991	+/-	1990	1991	+/-
MB-10	1.69	1.75	+0.06	1.88	1.80	-0.08
MB-9	0.69	1.46	+0.77	2.81	1.80	-1.01
MH-10	2.04	1.25	-0.79	1.88	1.70	-0.18
MH-10	1.88	1.00	-0.88	1.27	2.00	+0.73
MB-10	1.08	0.75	-0.33	1.31	0.67	-0.64
MW-10	1.65	2.67	+1.02	2.23	2.33	+0.10
FB-12	1.00	2.20	+1.20	2.23	2.33	+0.10
FB-11	0.27	1.50	+1.23	2.06	0.80	-1.26
FB-10	0.00	1.00	+1.00	3.04	1.60	-1.44

Similar to the data in Chart 7 when PE grades were included, five (55%) of the nine PASS students increased their GPA by at least half a grade point without PE grades. In contrast, one (11%) of the control group students increased his grades by a similar margin.

Among the PASS students, grades decreased by at least a tenth of a point for three (33%) students, whereas among the control group, five (55%) students' grades decreased by a similar margin.

Variations of less than a tenth of a grade point were considered unchanged. One (11%) PASS student and one (11%) of the control group showed no change.

* * *

Chart 9 displays the percentage of students whose grades increased, both including and excluding PE grades, for the PASS and control group students.

Chart 9

Increased GPA

	Including PE Grades				Excluding PE Grades			
	Change less than 0.10	+0.1-0.4	+0.5-0.9	+1.0+	Change less than 0.10	+0.1-0.4	+0.5-0.9	+1.0+
PASS	---	11%	55%	---	11%	---	11%	44%
Control Group	22%	11%	11%	---	---	22%	11%	---

Both with and without PE, five (55%) of the nine PASS students increased their GPA by at least half a grade point. Excluding PE, four (44%) increased their GPA by at least a full grade point. In contrast, with and without PE, one (11%) control group student's GPA increased by more than half a grade point and none increased by a full grade point. Grades that fluctuated less than a tenth of a grade point were considered unchanged.

* * *

Chart 10 displays the percentage of the students whose grades decreased, both including and excluding PE grades for the PASS and control group students.

Chart 10

Decreased GPA

	Including PE Grades				Excluding PE Grades			
	Change less than 0.10	-0.1-0.4	-0.5-0.9	-1.0+	Change less than 0.10	-0.1-0.4	-0.5-0.9	-1.0+
PASS	11%	11%	---	11%	---	11%	22%	---
Control Group	---	11%	44%	---	11%	11%	11%	33%

When PE grades are included, one (11%) PASS student's grades dropped by a

full grade point and one (11%) dropped less than half a grade point. Among the control group, one (11%) student's grades dropped less than half a grade point, and four (44%) dropped between a half and full grade point. Grades that fluctuated less than a tenth of a grade point (0.10) were considered unchanged.

Excluding PE grades, none of the PASS students' grades, but 33% of the control group's grades dropped by a full grade point. In total, three (33%) of the PASS students and five (55%) of the control group student's grades decreased.

CONCLUSION

The initial impact study confirms that PASS makes a difference in a student's academic performance as measured by overall GPA in all courses, both including and excluding PE courses. Further, it supports the premise of PASS that in order to improve academic performance for those students involved in athletics, there needs to be an increased, not a decreased, emphasis on the appropriate study and practice of sports.

AREAS OF FURTHER STUDY

A similar study of GPAs will be conducted during the 1991-92 school year with a larger sample of students. Besides tracking grades, there are three other long-term evaluation goals:

1. To measure the impact of PASS on self-esteem, student behavior, and appreciation for learning.
2. To measure the long-term impact of PASS on students' lives and learning.
3. To measure the impact on student academic performance when they participate in a PASS class taught by a teacher trained in the PASS curriculum.